

Claims

It is claimed:

1. A method for associating a patron with wagering game play at a gaming machine in a server-based gaming network, the method comprising:

associating a unique patron identification with the patron;

establishing a patron account for the patron, the patron account being identified by the unique patron identification;

associating the gaming machine with a universal personal identifier device for receiving a universal personal identifier having a patron identification, the universal personal identifier device capable of detecting and transmitting the patron identification;

receiving the patron identification;

comparing the patron identification to the unique patron identification; and

enabling collection of patron accounting data resulting from wagering game play if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a card reader.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a credit card.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the universal personal identifier is selected from the group consisting of a magnetic card, an optical card, a bar coded card, and a memory card.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the memory card is selected from the group consisting of a compact flash card, a memory stick, a smart card, a radio frequency card, a combination smart card, and a hybrid card.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a biometric device, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a biometric input by the patron.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a touch screen, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises identifying information entered by the patron, the identifying information unique to the patron and easily remembered by the patron.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a Bluetooth™ module device, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a Bluetooth™ mobile phone.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a Bluetooth™ module device, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a Bluetooth™ handheld device.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a microchip scanner, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a microchip embedded in the patron.
11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - detecting a wager for wagering game play at the gaming machine;
 - collecting the patron accounting data resulting from wagering game play; and
 - providing the patron accounting data to the patron account.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising enabling the patron to access the patron account if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification.

13. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

applying a promotional credit to the patron account based on the patron accounting data;

enabling the patron to access the patron account if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification;

enabling the patron to transfer the promotional credit to the gaming machine; and

permitting the patron to wager the promotional credit for wagering game play on the gaming machine.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the wagering game is selected from the group consisting of mechanical slots, video slots, video poker, video blackjack, video keno and video bingo.

15. A method for associating a patron with spending activity at a point of sale terminal in a server-based gaming network, the method comprising:

associating a unique patron identification with the patron;

establishing a patron account for the patron, the patron account being identified by the unique patron identification;

associating the point of sale terminal with a universal personal identifier device for receiving a universal personal identifier having a patron identification, the universal personal identifier device capable of detecting and transmitting the patron identification;

receiving the patron identification;

comparing the patron identification to the unique patron identification; and

enabling collection of patron accounting data resulting from spending activity if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a card reader.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a credit card.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the universal personal identifier is selected from the group consisting of a magnetic card, an optical card, a bar coded card, and a memory card.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the memory card is selected from the group consisting of a compact flash card, a memory stick, a smart card, a radio frequency card, a combination smart card, and a hybrid card.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a touch screen, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises identifying information entered by the patron, the identifying information unique to the patron and easily remembered by the patron.

21. The method of claim 15, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a biometric device, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a biometric input by the patron.

22. The method of claim 15, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a Bluetooth™ module device, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a Bluetooth™ mobile phone.

23. The method of claim 15, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a Bluetooth™ module device, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a Bluetooth™ handheld device.
24. The method of claim 15, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a microchip scanner, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a microchip embedded in the patron.
25. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
- detecting spending activity of the patron via the point of sale terminal;
 - collecting the patron accounting data resulting from the spending activity; and
 - providing the patron accounting data to the patron account.
26. The method of claim 25, further comprising enabling the patron to access the patron account if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification.
27. The method of claim 25, further comprising:
- applying a promotional credit to the patron account based on the patron accounting data;
 - enabling the patron to access the patron account if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification;
 - enabling the patron to transfer the promotional credit to the point of sale terminal;
 - and
 - permitting the patron to apply the promotional credit towards spending activity.
28. The method of claim 15, wherein the spending activity is selected from the group consisting of lodging spending, restaurant spending, entertainment spending, and merchandise spending.

29. A method for associating a patron with wagering game play at a gaming machine in a server-based gaming network, the method comprising:

associating a unique patron identification with the patron;

establishing a patron account for the patron, the patron account being identified by the unique patron identification;

associating the gaming machine with a Bluetooth™ module for receiving a unique identity bit stream having a patron identification from a Bluetooth™ portable device, the Bluetooth™ module capable of detecting and transmitting the patron identification;

detecting establishment of a Bluetooth™ wireless connection between the Bluetooth™ module and the Bluetooth™ portable device;

receiving the patron identification via the Bluetooth™ wireless connection;

comparing the patron identification to the unique patron identification; and

enabling collection of patron accounting data resulting from wagering game play if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the Bluetooth™ portable device comprises a Bluetooth™ mobile phone.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the Bluetooth™ portable device comprises a Bluetooth™ handheld device.

32. The method of claim 29, wherein detecting establishment of a Bluetooth™ wireless connection comprises:

detecting establishment of a Bluetooth™ link between the Bluetooth™ module and the Bluetooth™ portable device;

detecting establishment of a Bluetooth™ channel between the Bluetooth™ module and the Bluetooth™ portable device; and

detecting establishment of a Bluetooth™ high layer connection between the Bluetooth™ module and the Bluetooth™ portable device.

33. The method of claim 29, further comprising:

detecting a wager for wagering game play at the gaming machine;

collecting the patron accounting data resulting from wagering game play; and

providing the patron accounting data to the patron account.

34. The method of claim 33, further comprising enabling the patron to access the patron account if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification.

35. The method of claim 33, further comprising:

applying a promotional credit to the patron account based on the patron accounting data;

enabling the patron to access the patron account if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification;

enabling the patron to transfer the promotional credit to the gaming machine; and

permitting the patron to wager the promotional credit for wagering game play on the gaming machine.

36. The method of claim 29, further comprising disabling collection of the patron accounting data resulting from wagering game play when the Bluetooth™ wireless connection between the Bluetooth™ module and the Bluetooth™ portable device is not established.

37. The method of claim 29, wherein the wagering game is selected from the group consisting of mechanical slots, video slots, video poker, video blackjack, video keno and video bingo.

38. A server-based gaming network that allows a patron with a universal personal identifier to be associated with wagering game play at a gaming machine, the server-based gaming network comprising:

- a plurality of gaming machines, at least one of the gaming machines comprising:

- a value input device;

- a video display capable of displaying video images associated with the wagering game play;

- a universal personal identifier device configured to receive a universal personal identifier having a patron identification, and configured to detect the patron identification from the universal personal identifier; and

- a gaming machine controller operatively coupled to the value input device, the video display and the universal personal identifier device, the gaming machine controller comprising a processor and a memory coupled to the processor of the gaming machine controller, the gaming machine controller being programmed to:

- receive the patron identification from the universal personal identifier device,

- allow the patron to make a wager for the wagering game play,

- cause a video image representing an outcome of the wagering game play to be displayed on the video display, and

- determine a value payout associated with the outcome; and

a server operatively coupled to the at least one of the gaming machines, the server comprising:

a server controller, the server controller comprising a processor and a memory coupled to the processor of the server controller, the server controller being programmed to:

associate a unique patron identification with the patron,

establish a patron account for the patron, the patron account being identified by the unique patron identification,

receive the patron identification from the gaming machine controller,

compare the patron identification to the unique patron identification, and

enable collection of patron accounting data resulting from the wagering game play if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification.

39. The server-based gaming network of claim 38, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a card reader.

40. The server-based gaming network of claim 39, wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a credit card.

41. The server-based gaming network of claim 39, wherein the universal personal identifier is selected from the group consisting of a magnetic card, an optical card, a bar coded card, and a memory card.

42. The server-based gaming network of claim 41, wherein the memory card is selected from the group consisting of a compact flash card, a memory stick, a smart card, a radio frequency card, a combination smart card, and a hybrid card.
43. The server-based gaming network of claim 38, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a touch screen, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises identifying information entered by the patron, the identifying information unique to the patron and easily remembered by the patron.
44. The server-based gaming network of claim 38, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a biometric device, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a biometric input by the patron.
45. The server-based gaming network of claim 38, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a Bluetooth™ module device, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a Bluetooth™ mobile phone.
46. The server-based gaming network of claim 38, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a Bluetooth™ module device, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a Bluetooth™ handheld device.
47. The server-based gaming network of claim 38, wherein the universal personal identifier device comprises a microchip scanner, and wherein the universal personal identifier comprises a microchip embedded in the patron.
48. The server-based gaming network of claim 38, wherein the server controller is further programmed to:

detect a wager for the wagering game play at the at least one of the gaming machines;

collect the patron accounting data resulting from the wagering game play; and
provide the patron accounting data to the patron account.

49. The server-based gaming network of claim 48, wherein the server controller is further programmed to enable the patron to access the patron account if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification.

50. The server-based gaming network of claim 48, wherein the server controller is further programmed to:

apply a promotional credit to the patron account based on the patron accounting data;

enable the patron to access the patron account if the patron identification matches the unique patron identification;

enable the patron to transfer the promotional credit to the at least one of the gaming machines; and

permit the patron to wager the promotional credit for the wagering game play on the at least one of the gaming machines.